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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Written statement* submitted by Liberal International (World Liberal Union), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement, which is hereby circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2 February 2018]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Call to End Modern Slavery around the World

Liberal International (LI) welcomes the 2017 *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage* Report of the *International Labour Organisation*, *Walk Free Foundation* and the *International Organisation for Migration* and its conclusions that "international operation[s] should be strengthened between and among governments and with relevant international and regional organizations in areas such as labour law enforcement, law enforcement, migration governance, and fair recruitment, to prevent trafficking, protect victims, and deal with forced labour across borders." As the only political international with a Human Rights Committee and a specifically designated human rights programme, LI has been at the forefront of the debate - and in this sense fully supports and commits to implementing the conclusions from the report.

In this statement LI would like to pay specific attention to the recent discovery of migrant slave actions in Libya and the deteriorating situation with forced labour and sexual exploitation around the world.

Recognising that:

- According to the most recent data released by the *Walk Free Foundation* more than 40 million people worldwide are still trapped in some form of modern slavery
- As per the *Global Slavery Index (2016)*, 30 million people live as modern day slaves just in the Asia Pacific, with India topping the list with 18.35 million modern slaves followed by China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Democratic People's Republic of Korea
- Those highest at risk include children, women and individuals who are physically or linguistically isolated, culturally disoriented, subjected to crushing debts and with little to no knowledge of their rights
- The issue of modern slavery is a truly global one affecting every single country around the world

Stressing that:

- Slavery has been outlawed in every country around the world yet more people are enslaved today than when slavery was legal
- According to official data released by the *International Labour Organisation*:
  - there are 5.4 victims of modern slavery for every 1,000 people in the world
  - 1 in 4 victims of modern slavery are children
  - out of the 24.9 million people trapped in forced labour, 16 million people are exploited in the private sector such as domestic work, construction or agriculture; 4.8 million persons in sexual exploitation, and 4 million persons in forced labour imposed by state authorities
  - the majority of modern slaves are working in factories, on construction sites, on fishing boats, and in agricultural industries making slave labour a significant part of the global supply chain
  - women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour, accounting for 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors
- According to a *CNN investigation* conducted in October 2017 there are at least nine locations in Libya where illegal migrant slave auctions are taking place with men being sold for as little as 400USD
- Currently Libya does not offer sufficient administration and infrastructure to halt illegal migrant slave auctions, as instability in the country has also created a breeding ground for the trade to take hold

Affirming that:

- All countries have a responsibility to ensure the safe harbouring of refugees in accordance with international law
- Businesses share an equal responsibility, alongside governments, to ensure that their corporate supply chain is free of forced and child labour
- Strict visa requirements and heavy carrier sanctions have made the use of human traffickers and smugglers the only resort for refugees and migrants to reach peaceful and democratic states, resulting in serious human tragedies such as the one witnessed in Libya
- Libya and neighbouring countries have a collective responsibility to restore order by engaging the local authorities, regional and international organisations as well as enterprise

Recalling:

- LI's written statement to the 26th Session of the UN Human Rights Council, which called on -"migration-destination countries to further enable migration for reasons other than asylum-seeking in order to foster an inclusive economic globalization and secure individual opportunities for everyone"
- The Andorra Manifesto adopted at the 70th Anniversary LI Congress in 2017, which reaffirms that asylum is the responsibility of the international community as a whole and simultaneously recognizes the responsibility of liberal societies to help identify and fight the root causes of people fleeing their home countries, whether those causes are economic, political or violent conflicts
- LI's Resolution on "Migration and Integration" as adopted by the 57th LI Congress in Manila, the Philippines, which called for more generous national migration systems, through which both skilled and unskilled workers are allowed to seek work as economic immigrants
- Africa Liberal Network's (LI cooperating organisation) statement published on 28 November 2017 condemning the Libyan slave trade and calling for all of those who are found to partake in such actions to be prosecuted to the full extent of the law

Calls on:

- Governments around the world to follow the example of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and France and enact laws which require companies to report on their supply chain risks
- Companies to establish supplier's code of conduct and responsible sourcing guidelines, following in the footsteps of Apple and Adidas respectively, in order to eradicate human rights violations in their supply chains
- On the international community to address the root causes of modern slavery by developing long-term strategic, and evidence-based campaigns whereby businesses, local communities, civil society, and governments work together
- All relevant international stakeholders to provide input into the drafting of the international treaty on business and human rights, as set out by a specifically designated intergovernmental working group of the UN Human Rights Council
- All UN member states to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- On all countries which have not ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children of year 2000 and on all countries to introduce efficient policies to detect, protect and support victims of trafficking
- On the African Union to make the resolution of the crisis in Libya a priority and assist with the current investigation of the Libyan authorities into the illegal migrant slave auctions in the country
- Educational institutions in functioning democracies to introduce in school curriculum modern slavery and fair trade in order to increase sensitivity on the issue and eventually change the consumer's culture

Commits:

- For liberal parliamentarians in government and in opposition around the world to take a firm stand in their parliaments and speak up against modern slavery around the world and urge their governments to support the adoption of an international treaty on business and human rights
- For liberals in government and opposition to support the work of the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights and the *United Nations Global Compact* initiative
- For Liberal International and its Human Rights Committee to continue to work with the Africa Liberal Network, its leadership, and member parties in addressing the escalating crisis with forcibly enslaved African migrants and refugees in Libya